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S U M M A R Y

1. Two kinds of inferences can be drawn from the nature of Soviet propaganda: inferences about its possible effectiveness (which can be checked only by direct study of the listeners) and inferences about the Soviet propagandists themselves-- their mentality, their intentions, etc.

2. Effectiveness can be tentatively estimated by comparing Soviet propaganda with sixteen "principles of propaganda." It appears to have at least five strong points: it is clear, it is simple, it appeals to strong and universal motives, it gives an impression of absolute conviction, and it does not create antagonism by arguing issues other than the main one. Five weak points appear to be that it is relatively uninteresting, it rarely speaks in terms of the listener's own life, it does not know its listeners, group by group, or take their viewpoint very much into account, it does not attack the opponent's arguments directly where it should do so, and it probably does not give most of its potential listeners an impression of objectivity. In six other respects it seems to have an intermediate position between strength and weakness.

The net result seems to be that Soviet propaganda has an intermediate position between minimum and maximum effectiveness. It is possible for Western propaganda to be greatly inferior to it, or greatly superior.

3. The limitations of Soviet propaganda suggest corresponding limitations of the Soviet mentality: rigidity, evasiveness, diabolism. Each of these suggests vulnerability to a particular kind of strategy on the part of Western propagandists.

4. The use of Soviet propaganda as a basis for predicting Soviet policy warrants much more investigation than it has yet received. A case for this kind of analysis can be made on logical and also on empirical grounds; for instance, the Cominform break with Tito could have been predicted on the basis of propaganda analysis.

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I. TWO KINDS OF INFERENCE: ABOUT THE PROPAGANDIST AND ABOUT THE LISTENER

No one studies Soviet propaganda for its own sake. There are two great practical reasons for studying it: (1) as a clue to the mentality of the Soviet leaders and their political intentions, and (2) as a clue to the probable impact of Soviet propaganda on those who hear it. For those Western analysts whose thoughts are focused on the enigma of the Politburo, "propaganda analysis" is likely to mean only the first of these two types of inference; for those who are concerned with combatting Soviet propaganda it is likely to mean only the second. But both are legitimate subjects of study, and both call for systematic discussion.*

The previous report on "Soviet Propaganda (Some General Observations)" did not do justice to either problem. Certain modest inferences were made in it with regard to the goals and psychological assumptions of Soviet propagandists, and a few tentative evaluations were made as to possible strong points or vulnerabilities of Soviet propaganda from the standpoint of the listener. The field of possible inferences was not at all systematically explored, however, and nothing at all was said about the crucial problem of the process of inference-making itself. No answer was given to the question which perhaps should have been asked first of all: How reliable can such inferences be? Nor was there any exploration of the safeguards that are needed if even relatively sound and reliable inferences are to be made.

Of the two major types of inference--as to the propagandist's mentality and as to the listener's reaction--the first is decidedly the more speculative. Soviet propaganda does not carry on its face any clear evidence as to the motives or beliefs of the men who write it, or of the men who issue directives to those who write it. Concealment is a large part of their business. The listeners, however, are less of a mystery. Those listeners whom we also might hope to influence are in some respects like ourselves, and by putting ourselves in their place we can to some extent estimate how they would be likely to react. It is appropriate, then, to reverse the usual order and to consider the listeners first.

II. AN EVALUATION OF SOVIET PROPAGANDA IN TERMS OF SIXTEEN RELATIVELY NON-CONTROVERSIAL PRINCIPLES OF PROPAGANDA

It goes without saying that actual direct knowledge of listeners' reactions would be far more reliable than speculation about their probable reactions. There is, however, an immediate need for an informed estimate of the strengths and weaknesses of Soviet propaganda, from the standpoint of listeners' reactions, and the need is great enough to warrant some thinking on the subject even in the absence of adequate direct evidence. It is possible, too, to make a better-than-nothing estimate on two grounds: (1) asking ourselves how we would react if we were in the listener's position, and (2) comparing Soviet propaganda with those more generally accepted principles of persuasion which are grounded in the practice of successful propagandists in the past--Lenin, Hitler, Roosevelt, Churchill--and in what little we know about public opinion in general. It is true that the scientific study of public opinion is still in its infancy. How far it still has to go is evidenced, for instance, by the failure of public opinion "experts" to predict the election of Truman in 1948. But some thinking has been done, and it is possible to put down at least sixteen principles of propaganda which are relatively non-controversial in the sense that a considerable majority of Western students of public opinion would probably accept them, tentatively, until they are proved wrong. We present these principles herewith, together with an estimate, in each case, as to how well Soviet propaganda conforms to the principle. In each case Soviet propaganda will be rated on a five-point scale, from "very good" to "very poor." The principles can be divided, somewhat arbitrarily, into two groups: "putting the message across" and "avoiding psychological resistance":

A. Putting the Message Across1. Be clear.

In radio broadcasts, for instance, every word should be clearly enunciated, and the pace should not be too fast.

Neither words nor sentences should be too long. Academic or technical words should be avoided unless they are essential to the argument and are clearly explained. All or nearly all of the ideas should be intelligible to a person of below average intelligence.

* The distinction made here is similar to the generally accepted distinction between three aspects of propaganda: the intent of the propagandist, the content of what he says, and the effect on the listener. We are saying that content is of no interest except insofar as it permits inferences about intent or about effect. But the word "intent" seems too narrow; we are actually concerned with the total psychology of the propagandist, and not merely with what he consciously intends to accomplish. Mental blind-spots or rigidities, for instance, are not covered by the word "intent," and they are a major part of our present interest.

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Not only facts but also the implications of facts should be completely clear. This usually means spelling out the implications rather than leaving it to the reader to make his own inferences. (If carried to an extreme, however, this may conflict with the principle of appearing to be factual and objective.)

In this respect Soviet propaganda is unquestionably very good. The implications of facts, from the Soviet standpoint, are continually spelled out with complete clarity. If anything, Moscow errs on the side of carrying this principle to an extreme at which it conflicts with the principle of appearing to be factual and objective.

2. Be simple.

Concentrate on a few themes which are really of basic importance. Choose these themes carefully, but, once they are chosen, stick to them and pound on them until they are completely familiar even to your dumbest or least attentive listener.

Aim at variety of illustrations and of supporting argument, but not at variety of basic themes.

Again the Soviet rating would be very good. A small number of major themes, and the subthemes associated with them, account for by far the larger part of Soviet propaganda.

3. Be interesting.

Vary illustrations, arguments, style, etc.--everything but basic themes. Use humor, ridicule, irony, etc., where appropriate.

Be timely. Catch the listener's interest in an event at the time when that interest is at its peak.

Use human-interest stories where possible: first-person narratives, eye-witness accounts. Use drama in all its forms, including, perhaps, even the drama of conflicting opinions, if the outcome of the discussion is clearly and absolutely in line with your own basic themes. Personalize your commentators, so that your listener feels that he knows the commentator as an individual.

Here the rating falls to poor or very poor. Soviet propaganda is monolithic, standardized, repetitive, to a degree which might easily bore and repel an intellectually alert listener. It is heavy-handed, humorless (with rare and welcome exceptions), and largely devoid of narrative or dramatic interest. It also deals primarily in abstractions (such as peace and an undefined "democracy") rather than in concrete and vivid detail.

It may be that the standardizing character of the Stalinist dictatorship has something to do with this; and it may be, too, that the Soviet domestic propagandist, speaking ordinarily to a captive audience which can hardly avoid listening, has little incentive to develop the skills of audience-appeal which are highly developed in our competitive, entertainment-minded American culture. The advertising skills for which Americans are notorious may repel a West-European intellectual, but at least they do not bore him as Soviet propaganda probably does.

4. Be factual.

The best argument is a hard and tangible fact. No matter how clearly and continually the implications of facts may be spelled out, the starting point of the inference should always be a concrete fact. And no matter how large the proportion of commentary may be, as distinguished from news, general commentary should always be interlarded with enough illustrative facts so that it seems like a generalization from facts rather than mere polemics or speculation.

There are two great reasons for this: (1) timely and authoritative news is the best attention-getter, and (2) it carries more conviction, especially with a skeptical listener, than argument does. People usually like to think that they are arriving at their own opinions directly from "the facts," and are not being pushed into them by self-interested propagandists.

Here the Soviet rating would perhaps be fair. Moscow's propagandists are adept at using recent events as pegs on which to hang their basic themes, even though the themes themselves are rarely supported by any systematic marshalling of facts. They are also adept at giving an impression of being descriptive at those

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points where they are actually being most interpretive; where their conclusions are most vulnerable they calmly refer to these conclusions as "facts" which "everyone knows." Soviet propaganda can perhaps be accurately described as pseudo-factual--i.e., giving an appearance of fact-mindedness, but perhaps vulnerable to attack by a shrewd opponent who could show how thin (not how false, but how thin) the factual facade actually is.

5. But select your facts

Play up the news that supports your case. Select from history the facts that support your case. Select carefully also the arguments or frames of reference in which your case appears strongest and keep the discussion in those frames of reference where possible.

Corollary 1: Know the points on which your case is most vulnerable, and reduce discussion on these points to a minimum--without making the avoidance so extreme that it is obvious.

Corollary 2: Arrange to have events occur--a Congress, a protest meeting, an official statement--which support your case. They can then be played up as "news" without losing the appearance of factual and objective reporting.

Here the Soviet rating is probably fair. Although Moscow seems to miss a surprising number of opportunities, it is especially effective in carrying out Corollaries 1 and 2: evading without seeming to evade, and manufacturing events which seem to support its case.

6. Tie up the propaganda with the listeners' own life.

Most people are absorbed in their own personal affairs, and interested in politics only as it affects them personally. "Will my house be bombed?" "Will my boy be sent to fight?" "Will I lose my job?" Talk on this personal level, at least until you have established the necessary link between what the listener is already interested in and what you want him to be interested in.

Poor. The personal level is not Moscow's long suit. It deals continually in broad abstractions such as peace and democracy, and perhaps it assumes that peace and economic welfare for the masses (which is always implicit in its use of the term "democracy") are sufficiently concrete already in the minds of its listeners. But it does surprisingly little to drive home this personal relevance.

7. Appeal to the strong motives that your listener already has.

Propaganda never creates energy; it only releases or directs the emotional energy that already exists in your listeners' psychological make-up.

Find out what is really on your listener's mind, and then talk in terms of it, showing how your program is the way to get what he already wants, or changing his loves and hates by linking your side with what he loves and the enemy with what he hates. Don't waste time on the relatively thankless task of trying to make him want; fundamentally, what he doesn't already want.

In the absence of specific knowledge, focus on those motives which are in general the strongest and most universal: the desires for peace, economic welfare, national independence, etc.

Good. Moscow has virtually abandoned its former attempt to preach a radically new ideology, and concentrates instead on universally or almost universally approved values. Its choice of values for primary emphasis also seems psychologically sound. The one major political motive which it does not stress is the desire for individual freedom, and this is probably a necessary omission in view of the inherent vulnerability of the Soviet case on this point.

8. Know your listeners, group by group, and take their viewpoint--not your own--as your starting point and frame of reference.

This does not necessarily call for anthropological generalizations about "national character," although such generalizations are useful if and when they can be made on a sound basis. As a minimum, however, it calls for specific knowledge about the present beliefs, loyalties, prejudices, desires and frustrations of each major national group, and of each major subdivision (working class, peasantry, urban middle class) within the more important national groups.

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This minimum is important because.

(a) It makes your listener feel that you know him and are interested in him. He feels appreciated and, in a sense, flattered.

(b) It enables you to harness his present strong motives (#7 above) and avoid running counter to his prejudices.

(c) It enables you to concentrate on the points on which he still needs to be convinced. To belabor a point on which he is already convinced is not only a waste of time; it also may suggest to him that you consider the point to be in need of further proof. What seems to him self-evident or highly probable should be treated as if it were self-evident to everyone, and not argued as if it needed arguing; what he is dubious about should be solidly and factually supported. It may be desirable also to show a candid recognition of his doubts as legitimate, and to answer them fully and patiently, though the attitude of the propagandist should be "you will be convinced when you know all the facts" rather than "this is a debatable issue."

Poor. Although Moscow deals specifically with the political events in each part of the world, it shows a monolithic uniformity in type of treatment, and it seems to make no attempt whatever to meet and answer the specific skepticisms in the minds of its listeners. This may be related to the general Soviet lack of interest in psychology and cultural anthropology, and to the typically dogmatic rather than empirical character of Soviet thinking.

9. Give an impression of absolute conviction

The speaker should have an air of complete self-confidence and strength of conviction. He should not allow it to appear that he himself has the slightest doubt as to the validity of his facts, the logic of his arguments, or the rightness of his cause.

This perhaps implies that in many cases an actually controversial idea should be presented as if its truth were self-evident and universally accepted. Facts should perhaps be given not as proof of a basic theme but merely as one more illustration of what has already been proved by a mountain of accumulated facts. (But when this technique is used to evade the necessity for real proof it can perhaps be made to look ridiculous by a resourceful opponent who does produce proof; and it also has the disadvantage that it rides rough-shod over the listener's doubts rather than showing an understanding of them. We need empirical evidence as to how far the method can be pushed without losing its effectiveness.)

Very good. Soviet propaganda is outstanding in the impression of certainty and conviction which it gives. The Soviet dogmatists admit no doubts whatever. In a sense they can even be described as unemotional; they are at least unexcited. The impression they give is one of quiet but absolute certainty.

They also carry to an extreme the "as everyone knows" technique. If they err, then, they err on the side of riding rough-shod over listeners' doubts and over contrary facts, rather than on the side of a needless admission that some points may be debatable.

B. Avoiding Psychological Resistance

10. Eliminate any impression of antagonism between yourself and your audience.

It may be that some active identification of the speaker with his audience, some definite bond of fellow-feeling, is always needed. But as a minimum there should at least be an absence of any barriers based on a feeling that the speaker is too "different," that he is critical, that he is boastful, that he is condescending, or that he is exploiting the special susceptibilities of his audience. Humor helps to create a bond of fellow-feeling; and the path can also be made smoother by showing an awareness of what is on the listeners' minds, and by not opposing their prejudices.

Corollary: Where possible, work through native agents, or the local press and radio. Or quote local persons who uphold your viewpoint. Ideas coming from a foreign source are always suspect.

In this respect the Soviet propagandists are perhaps fair. They go all out to avoid antagonizing the national or religious prejudices of their audiences; they appeal specifically to the "people" in every nation, with criticism directed only against their capitalist "ruling circles"; and they presumably create a bond of identification also by appealing to universal motives such as the desire for peace. They make

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good use of local Communists, including the Communist press. On the other hand, they are impersonal and in a sense abstract; they show very little humor, and little awareness of the psychology of specific audiences; and their extreme denunciations, distortions, and paranoid suspicions may give many listeners the feeling that they are listening to a person quite unlike themselves.

11. Build up the self-esteem of your audience.

This most general principle of "winning friends and influencing people" is peculiarly difficult to apply in the case of broadcasts from a strong nation (the U.S. or the USSR) to weaker nations. In this case the pride of the listeners is especially sensitive to indications of boastfulness or of condescension. It seems likely, for example, that specific praise of a particular nation, in broadcasts to that nation, would be interpreted by some listeners as condescension or as a transparent attempt to exploit them by means of flattery, while any self-praise is especially likely to be interpreted as boastfulness. The dilemma can perhaps be best resolved by including one's own nation and the listeners' nation in a larger unity such as "the free nations," "the democratic nations," or the United Nations. Resemblances between two nations (e.g., between the French revolutionary tradition and the Russian revolution, or between the liberal democratic tradition in France and in America) can also be pointed out, if there is no indication of superiority on the other side.

Fair. Moscow continually identifies itself with "the peoples of the world," "the democratic camp," etc., with the implication that all of its supporters throughout the world share in its glory. At the same time, it often refers to the USSR as the "vanguard" of the democratic movement, or as the "mighty bulwark" of the forces of peace. This is perhaps a reasonable compromise between the inevitable Soviet self-glorification and the necessity to give credit to the listener.

On the other hand, Ehrenburg's occasional masterly appeals to French national pride and to the common revolutionary tradition of France and Russia represent the only importance instance, in recent Soviet propaganda, of this type of thing. The kind of understanding which shows real appreciation of other national cultures is not a typical Soviet virtue.

12. Don't create antagonism by arguing issues other than the main one.

No matter how much you may disapprove of the audience's religion, its racial prejudices, its monarchical sentiments, its way of treating women, its national egotism, its national hostilities, or its economic practices, don't criticize or challenge these unless you feel that they are actually the major issue. You will have achieved much, as a propagandist, if you convince your listeners of one single point--and if that is the main point. The tenacity of established beliefs and prejudices is tremendous. To challenge them needlessly has two great disadvantages: it wastes time which might better be spent on the main issue, and it creates needless antagonism.

For example, if collective security against Soviet aggression is the primary objective of American propaganda, and if the issue of capitalism vs. socialism is relatively secondary, then Americans should not needlessly antagonize democratic socialists, in Britain and elsewhere, by arguing for capitalism and against socialism. We should stress the great common interests which unite us with the democratic socialists throughout the world, rather than the problems of economic organization on which we and they do not see eye to eye.

In this respect Soviet propagandists are very good. They have drastically softened their earlier attacks on religion, nationalism, the "bourgeois" family, bourgeois parliamentarism, and "opportunists" as against revolutionists. They rarely if ever attack monarchy (or Japanese emperor-worship) as such. They scrupulously avoid needless entanglement in national controversies such as that between the Jews and the Arabs. They even tend to ignore the distinction between capitalism and socialism, whenever this line does not coincide with the one great line between friend and foe.

13. Attack your opponent's case directly and persistently, at the points where it is weakest--if your listeners are aware of your opponent's case and not fully aware of your answer.

This is the chief exception to the usually valid principle (see above, #9) that your opponent's case should not be advertised--or dignified--by quoting it. The decisive factor is where your listener already stands. If he is in a friendly allied nation and probably has not been listening to the enemy propaganda at all, you can probably consolidate his support most effectively by treating that propaganda as too obviously false to call for an answer. To take the enemy propaganda seriously would in this case be to dignify it, and also to carry it to a new audience. But if your listener has already been thoroughly exposed to your opponent's ideology, you cannot ignore that ideology without

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leaving large sections of the propaganda field to your opponent, and also appearing to be evasive

Very poor. Moscow is itself highly evasive on the issues on which it is most vulnerable, and shows little resourcefulness in exploiting the most vulnerable spots in its opponents' case or in its opponents' propaganda.

14. Give an impression of objectivity.

This may seem to be incompatible with "giving an impression of absolute conviction." Actually it is not, if a clear enough distinction is made between the concepts of objectivity and neutrality. Objectivity does not need to imply neutrality. The attitude of the propagandist should be "these facts are so plain that only a biased person could fail to arrive at our conclusions." An objective person could not fail to take sides against Hitler's conquest of Czechoslovakia and Poland; similarly, an objective person could not fail to take sides with us in the present conflict."

It is necessary to distinguish also between the impression of objectivity which is created by a seemingly unbiased analysis of objective facts and the impression of neutrality which is created by refraining even from interpreting or pointing out the implications of facts. The former is certainly sound propaganda practice; the latter is highly questionable. It conflicts with our first propaganda principle, which is the need for clarity, and also with our ninth principle, which is the need to give an impression of absolute conviction. The burden of proof is on those who claim that, in order to appear objective, we should pretend to be neutral and refrain even from pointing out how the facts support our own case.

Poor or fair. The Soviet practice is peculiarly difficult to evaluate in this respect, in the absence of direct knowledge of listeners' reactions. Its gross evasions and distortions, its failure to include neutral news, and its violent denunciation of persons whom many of the listeners must admire (e.g., Tito), probably give many listeners an impression of extreme non-objectivity. Yet in several ways Soviet propagandists seem to be trying to appear objective, and perhaps with many listeners they succeed. Their typical attitude is the one recommended above: "the facts are so obvious that no objective person could remain neutral." They keep a factual facade; their tone of voice on the radio is calm and confident, without excitement or emotional intensity; the form of their sentences is descriptive rather than imperative; they very often use the "everyone knows" technique, which gives the impression that no urging or arguing is necessary since the facts are already so obvious. A receptive listener who heard only the Soviet radio could easily get the impression that it was the Soviet commentators who were balanced and their opponents who were "hysterical."

15. Don't tell obvious lies.

The morality of lying in propaganda is debatable; the stupidity of lying in a way that your audience will recognize as lying is not debatable at all. In all or nearly all matters of tangible fact, as distinguished from interpretation, it is worth while to be scrupulously accurate.

Corollary 1: Be especially cautious in regard to facts about the listener's own country, where he may be in a position to discover your errors.

Corollary 2: Avoid predictions which may not come true.

Fair. Contrary to a very general impression, Moscow is not ordinarily reckless in disregarding matters of tangible fact. With certain outstanding exceptions (such as the claim that South Korea attacked North Korea, and the claim that there are 18 million unemployed in the United States), it seems to be reasonably realistic in adhering to the principle of not telling obvious lies.

16. Conform to the policy of your government.

Your propaganda will be somewhat discredited if your government does something that is clearly inconsistent with what you have been preaching. Conversely, your government will have its hands tied to some extent if your propaganda implies a moral commitment which it may feel compelled to violate. On both counts, then, there should be coordination and mutual accommodation. A moderate regard for the public-opinion factors which are paramount in the mind of the propagandist would be a wholesome thing in the formation of a policy, and a realistic regard for the necessities of practical policy (e.g., from a purely military standpoint) would be a wholesome thing for the propagandist. With such an understanding, he might even present the practical considerations in his propaganda, so as to prepare the minds of the world audience for what actually develops in the policy of his country.

Fair. The coordination between Soviet propaganda and the foreign policy of the USSR seems on the whole to be good. The two are closely integrated in, for example, the tactics of Soviet delegates in the United Nations. There are at least two instances,

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however, in which the coordination appears to have been poor. The Berlin blockade was not given any intelligible rationale before it occurred (or after), and the North Korean aggression must have been highly embarrassing to many propagandists who had been pushing the greatly intensified Soviet "peace campaign." From a purely military standpoint the North Koreans probably gained by the element of surprise, which would have been diminished if they had previously presented to the world a plausible pretext for fighting; but from the standpoint of world public opinion the absence of a prior pretext was probably a costly mistake. (There is of course no way of knowing whether the cost of the omission was deliberately calculated and accepted, or whether there was a failure of coordination between propagandists and military policy-makers within the Communist system.)

Summarizing:

A. Soviet propaganda has been estimated as good in the following ways:

1. It is clear.
2. It is simple.
3. It appeals to strong and universal motives.
4. It gives an impression of absolute conviction.
5. It does not create antagonism by arguing issues other than the main one.

B. It has been estimated as poor in the following ways:

1. It is relatively uninteresting.
2. It does not often tie up directly with the listeners' own life.
3. It does not know its listeners, group by group, or take their various viewpoints very much into account.
4. It does not attack directly and persistently the opponent's arguments which are well known to the listener.
5. It probably does not give most of its listeners an impression of objectivity.

C. It has been estimated as fair

1. It is only moderately factual.
2. It is perhaps not quite as intelligently selective as might be expected.
3. It establishes a bond with the listener only negatively, in that it apparently tries to avoid antagonizing him in any way.
4. It does little to build up the self-esteem of its audience, apart from including all of its audience, implicitly, in the "democratic camp."
5. Although it apparently tries not to tell obvious lies, there have been some conspicuous exceptions to this policy.
6. It conforms in general to the policy of the Soviet Government, though in two cases there is reason to suspect a lack of coordination.

In other words, the indications are that Communist propaganda as a whole falls somewhere in the intermediate range between minimum and maximum effectiveness. In the absence of comparative data, nothing can be said about how it compares with its Western competitors. They might now be much better or much worse. But this much can be said: it is possible for our own propagandists to be far superior to those of Moscow. If we can equal them on the points where they are strong and greatly surpass them on the points where they are weak, we can win a decisive victory in the propaganda war.

III. INFERENCES ABOUT THE PROPAGANDISTA. Soviet Propaganda As a Reflection of Soviet Mentality

As has been suggested above, inferences about the propagandist are considerably more speculative than inferences about the listener. This is perhaps especially true in the case of Russian propagandists. The secretiveness of Russians in general, at least in their dealings with foreigners, is proverbial; and the secretiveness of Stalin and his fellow Politburo-members is equally familiar. It can be taken for granted that, whatever their actual motives and intentions may be, these men will not willingly betray their intentions or expose to public scrutiny their less savory motives.

For example, a study of Soviet propaganda gives no clear answer to the one question which has most exercised the minds of Western observers: How strongly does the Kremlin want to avoid or postpone an all-out war with the United States? The pious Soviet talk of peace and democracy would not be at all incompatible with a conscious intention to provoke a general war with the Western democracies next month, or next year, or whenever the Kremlin feels that it would be most likely to win a world war which it perhaps believes to be

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inevitable in any case. The Soviet talk about peace and about Western aggression may be a form of conscious or unconscious projection, in which the Soviet leaders project onto the Wall Street "ruling circles" an aggressive intent which actually exists in their own minds. This would presumably be good propaganda strategy, since, if and when the Kremlin provokes a world war, it would be desirable to have the listeners predisposed to believe that the "ruling circles" in the West were the guilty parties.

On the other hand, the peace talk could coexist with a genuine desire for peace and with a genuine suspicion--however irrational such a suspicion might be--that the rulers of the West are capable of launching a sudden atomic attack on the USSR. This also would presumably be good propaganda strategy, since, if the Western attack had any plausible pretext whatever, Soviet propagandists would want to ensure that world public opinion would not be taken in by that pretext. An innocent man, like a guilty one, prefers to be believed innocent. And in any case, regardless of whether a world war comes, the peace talk has great propaganda value. In a world obsessed by fear of atomic war, the side which most successfully brands the enemy as endangering peace reaps a great propaganda harvest. On this question, then, the propaganda evidence is not conclusive. Even if one of the two lines of inference is more plausible than the other, it must still be granted that the facts do not point definitely in one direction rather than the other.

Clearly, then, the clues provided by Soviet propaganda with regard to the mentality of the Soviet elite must be of a relatively subtle nature. They must be things which the authors of the propaganda are probably unaware of, or which they are not likely to try to conceal.

At least one group of propaganda characteristics fulfills these specifications: the ways in which Soviet propaganda falls short of maximum effectiveness. A misconception which causes the propagandist to alienate his listeners cannot be attributed to a desire for concealment. It must be due to a real misunderstanding, because if the misunderstanding were not real the propagandist would immediately eliminate the defects in his propaganda which result from it. Our previous discussion of the weak points in Soviet propaganda is therefore relevant to the present problem. In fact, for our present purpose it is not essential to have proof that a given technique is or is not effective with its intended audience. The Soviet propagandist probably has even less empirical knowledge of listeners' reactions than we do. He is guessing, as we are. But for that very reason, the nature of his guess may have psychological significance; when knowledge is lacking, what a person believes is especially likely to reflect his own psychological make-up. What we need to do, then, is to examine somewhat more systematically the psychological problems touched upon in the previous report, which made certain inferences about the goals and psychological assumptions of the propagandist based on the nature of his propaganda.

Three characteristics of the Soviet output will be considered from this standpoint:

1. Rigidity. Does the rigid over-simplicity of Soviet propaganda indicate a similar rigid over-simplicity in Soviet thought as a whole? In several different aspects of Soviet propaganda we have noticed rigidity, or simplicity, or both. Its basic simplicity has been counted as a great strength, but it has been rated as simple also in the sense that it fails to adapt itself flexibly to the complexities of objective reality; and it is here, at the point where simplicity becomes rigidity, that it becomes a source of weakness rather than strength. For example, the Soviet output has been rated as relatively uninteresting, with repetitiveness not only in basic themes (which is sound propaganda strategy) but also in style of presentation (which is unnecessary, and makes for boredom). The relative lack of color, variety, humor, human interest, and drama cannot be attributed to deliberate policy, especially since we know that oral agitators are instructed to "be interesting." It is therefore a reasonable inference that it is due to a general drabness or timidity in the minds of the propagandists themselves. Perhaps it follows partly from a misguided effort to be dignified, or to be like Stalin; but an identification of dignity with slavish imitation of Stalin's steam-roller style of writing is itself a sign of a poverty of imagination. (Of course we are not here concerned with the Russian mentality as such. Russian literature in the past has shown anything but poverty of imagination. We are concerned only with the mentality of a particular bureaucratic group which has been drilled in the pervasive discipline of the Communist Party and is continually under the watchful eye of heresy-hunters in the Party. What is distinctive in their psychology may be far more a product of totalitarianism than of the Russian culture as such.)

In other ways too they fail to adapt to the complexities of reality. They seldom talk in terms of the listener's own life--perhaps partly because of a lack of imagination, or curiosity, with regard to the life of persons other than themselves. They seldom adapt their propaganda to particular national audiences--perhaps because they are satisfied with the relatively simple Stalinist picture of "the capitalist world," and relatively uninterested in finding out how the thinking of a French laborer actually differs from that of an Indian peasant. They do not attack directly the opponent's arguments which are well known to the listener--perhaps partly because to do so effectively would mean to enter momentarily into the whole anti-Soviet system of facts and ideas. They have a blindspot for

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psychology and another for anthropology--perhaps partly because the task of stretching their minds to include other minds and other cultures is to them vaguely baffling and disturbing. They probably prefer the safe, familiar, clear-cut outlines of their super-simple Stalinist world-picture.

In fact it would seem that we can add non-empiricism as a third inseparable aspect of the psychological trinity which we have already defined as including rigidity and over-simplicity. Soviet propagandists seem to lack a strong interest in objective facts of any sort, except insofar as facts can be pressed directly into the service of propaganda purposes. Facts are always complicated, and complexity always calls for the stretching of one's mind. Besides, the search for facts might lead to irreverent questioning of the revealed Truth and brand the questioner as a "cosmopolitan" who "kows" to Western intellectualism.

If this psychological pattern (rigidity, over-simplicity, and non-empiricism) is in fact a root weakness in the mentality of Soviet propagandists, then the way in which Western propagandists can take advantage of it is clear. We can be enormously superior to the Soviet propagandists, in some respects, if we cultivate to the full our own questioning, irreverent, fact-minded Western temper. Flexibility need not be sought for its own sake, and certainly complexity should not. But fact-mindedness should. If our understanding of human minds throughout the world is enormously greater than that of the Kremlin propagandists (as it can be), we can detect and exploit their ignorance wherever the unrealistic simplicity of their thinking keeps them from a meeting of minds with those whom they want to influence.

2. Evasiveness. Although Soviet propagandists often seem to be trying to say just enough about a topic to avoid the appearance of being evasive, their evasions are nevertheless very great. On the atomic issue, for instance, their evasion of the problem of implementing world control is almost total. It would seem that their unwillingness to tackle the enemy's case on the points where it is strongest is considerably greater than could be accounted for solely on the ground of good propaganda strategy, since they run a constant risk of having their evasions exposed and exploited. If this is true, a reasonable inference is that their own thinking, and not merely their propaganda, is evasive. On the atomic issue, for instance, it seems likely that they themselves shy away from honest thinking about the problems of international control.

Such a failure to think honestly and clearly about the issues on which they are most vulnerable would constitute an especially important instance of the general intellectual timidity which we have already inferred on the basis of other facts. It is like the evasiveness of a neurotic individual on the points where his self-esteem is most vitally threatened, or like the frightened boxer who lowers his head and does not look at his opponent. And, if either analogy is valid, it indicates an especially important type of vulnerability. It means that a vigorous Western propaganda offensive on the issues which they evade would probably find them peculiarly unable to defend themselves on these issues. A systematic exposure of their evasions would have value in itself, even if it forced them to change their tactics and develop explicit counter-arguments. And in addition there is reason to think that these counter-arguments would turn out to be relatively weak. The neurotic person does not think clearly about the points on which he is neurotically defensive, and the boxer with his head down does not see clearly what his opponent is doing. In all probability the Soviet propagandists would be unable to think clearly or argue effectively on world control of atomic energy, or on individual freedom within the Soviet sphere, or on the historical record of Soviet aggression, or on any other of the threatening issues which they have tended to ignore.

This whole line of thinking may seem questionable to persons who are used to thinking of the Russians as both realistic and ruthlessly self-confident. Our image of Stalin is not that of a "timid" person. But Stalin himself might not take the time to consider defensive propaganda strategy; it would be more likely to be done by underlings who would be fearful of Stalin's displeasure. And in any case, brazen self-confidence on certain points is not at all incompatible, psychologically, with defensiveness on others. It can even be contended that the Soviet cult of militancy and of "iron discipline," with its glorification of leaders who are "steely in the struggle," is psychologically inseparable from a particular sort of intellectual timidity. Even Stalin himself may be intellectually timid, in the sense that he shrinks from those particular thoughts which might weaken his ideological single-mindedness and cause doubt or vacillation. This is not equivalent to saying that he, or the Politburo in general, or the disciplined propagandists who work under the Politburo, can be fairly described as "neurotic." It means only that they have purchased a certain kind of emotional strength at the cost of a certain kind of intellectual strength. In the protected atmosphere of a culture in which discussion of fundamentals is prohibited, their thinking on basic issues has not become resilient through the give-and-take of the

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kind of controversy which goes on continually in the West. Their basic beliefs have extraordinary clarity and monolithic self-consistency, but these qualities have been achieved only by developing a defensive lack of attention to contradictory facts or ideas, and not by the boldly inclusive and integrative type of thinking which can flourish only in an atmosphere of free discussion. Psychologically speaking, their thinking is undialectical. It contains thesis and antithesis (the "two camps" into which their world is divided), but not synthesis.

3. Diabolism. One of the three great Soviet distortions which were discussed in the previous paper is the continual painting of Western leaders as actuated only by the most evil motives. They are as unnaturally evil as the devils in primitive mythology or the villain in a cheap melodrama. The question now comes up: do the Soviet propagandists actually believe this, or is it simply a propaganda device calculated to withdraw popular support from those who happen to stand in the way of Soviet world-conquest? In all probability it is both. The question then becomes: how much of Soviet diabolism is actually believed by the propagandists?

The problem is much more difficult than either of the two we have already considered. An answer consistent with available knowledge would have to be based on all of the available knowledge, and especially what is known about Politburo actions as distinguished from Politburo words. Certainly the mere fact that they say we are devils is no proof that they believe it. On the other hand, the extreme character of their diabolism--involving, as it does, a danger of making Soviet propaganda a laughing-stock in the minds of its more realistic and objective listeners--does tend to support the hypothesis that a large part of it is believed. The Kremlin propagandists are probably aware that it is an exaggeration, but they are perhaps quite unaware of how much of an exaggeration it appears to be in the minds of those who do not already take for granted the whole Soviet frame of reference.

Here, too, direct study of listener-psychology is needed. In the absence of such knowledge, we can only speculate that, while the denunciation of "Wall Street" is perhaps generally acceptable, the denunciation of Truman, Bevin, Schumacher, Tito and other left-of-center Westerners is not. An American citizen who has voted for Truman in the sincere belief that he is more "liberal" or "left" than his Republican opponent is likely to be baffled and incredulous when told by Moscow that the two major parties are indistinguishable and that Truman is a vile warmonger and a tool of Wall Street. Similarly, many members of the non-Soviet Left in Europe must be baffled when told by Moscow that Tito is a mere tool of Wall Street, especially since, before Tito declared his independence of the Kremlin, Moscow described Yugoslavia as a true "People's Democracy." If this is true, and if Moscow does not know how true it is, it suggests a genuine inability of Soviet leaders to see how wildly exaggerated a large part of their official diabolism actually is. In other words, it suggests that they believe perhaps half or two-thirds of it.

Like their evasiveness, this suggests vulnerability to a particular sort of attack. They are probably incapable of an effective rejoinder if their diabolism is simply laughed at. The apparently deadly seriousness of their suspicions is likely to be inflexible just to the extent that it is genuine. Good-natured ridicule, then, should bring out in them either no rejoinder at all or such a ponderous rejoinder that it would illustrate the very quality we were laughing at. Simultaneously, of course, we would have to demonstrate continually that we were less indiscriminately suspicious than they are. For instance, our American propaganda would have to continue its present policy of not duplicating the incessant Soviet charges that the enemy actually wants a world war. In our atomic age this charge is particularly lacking in plausibility, and we might gain in reputation for objectivity and balance if we often explicitly said that we do not accuse the Kremlin of wanting war. Instead, we could point to their pathological suspiciousness as a poisoning factor in world politics and insist that their craving for world domination is strong enough (unless deterred by enough opposing strength) to make them take even the risk of an atomic holocaust in order to achieve specific power objectives.

B. Soviet Propaganda As a Basis for Prediction

The type of propaganda-analysis that has most intrigued the minds of persons in the American Government is the type which attempts to infer from Soviet propaganda what the Kremlin intends to do. This is understandable, since what the Kremlin intends to do is both extremely important and extremely difficult to estimate on any other basis. Limited and fallible as this type of analysis may be, it is one possible basis for inference, and when all other bases of inference are so plainly inadequate, either singly or in combination, it is at least well worth while to consider carefully what contribution propaganda-analysis might make. It should be added, too, that in comparison with some other intelligence operations this one is extremely cheap. Voluminous records of Soviet propaganda are now being kept and will continue to be kept. The small amount of extra labor that would be needed for a careful analysis of these records from the standpoint of their possible predictive value represents a minute fraction of the cost of the total intelligence operation.

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And actually, in spite of all the limitations of the method, the case for it on both logical and empirical grounds seems strong enough to warrant much more investigation of it than has yet occurred.

1. The empirical case for the method includes the following facts:

a. The Analysis Section of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service during World War II made a number of correct predictions of Nazi actions, based on analysis of Nazi propaganda. There were also some incorrect predictions, but the evidence, pro and con, has been systematically examined by Alexander George, in a study for the Rand Corporation, and he finds that the correct inferences definitely outweighed the incorrect ones. He has also thoroughly examined the processes of inference-making that were used, and has laid a basis for a sounder, more valid process of inference-making in the future than was possible during World War II, when the art of propaganda-analysis was in its infancy.* What has not been done--and should be done as soon as possible--is to study with equal thoroughness the historical record of relationships between Soviet propaganda and Soviet policy. The Soviet Government is not the Nazi Government, and although there are many similarities there are also important differences. Since Soviet behavior is what we now want to predict, it is necessary to know in detail how it is related to Soviet propaganda.

b. We know now that the Cominform break with Tito could have been predicted if adequate propaganda-analysis had been going on at that time. Beginning at least six weeks before there was any official indication of the break, the Soviet propaganda machine markedly reduced its attention to Yugoslavia and its praise of Tito's achievements. Although Yugoslavia had been very prominent in Soviet propaganda about the Satellites, it definitely receded into the background during May 1948. This was noticed at the time by certain persons, but no use was made of it in intelligence reports. In this instance there was a very great scarcity of other information pointing in the same direction. If, therefore, regular quantitative analysis and interpretation of quantitative data had been going on at the time, it would have been an especially valuable basis for predicting what actually happened.

c. Soviet propaganda treatment of the Berlin blockade was meager in amount and did not contain any stress on the justice of the Soviet position. It was the sort of propaganda that might result from a desire not to make any commitment, in the eyes of the audience, and, by avoiding commitment, to avoid the loss of face which would result if Soviet authorities retreated from their position--as they eventually did. The same thing occurred in Soviet treatment of the Korean war. Although vehemently on the side of North Korea, Moscow scrupulously refrained from hinting at the kind of direct Soviet participation which, during the first few days, the Western world was greatly anxious about. These are two of many instances in which the degree of commitment implied by Soviet propaganda appears to have had predictive value.

2. On logical grounds also the case for inferences of this sort can be rather cogently argued. As has been said before in this paper, propaganda in general and Soviet propaganda in particular, obviously cannot be taken at its face value. The propagandist's job is to win converts or to maintain morale, not to express "truth." But, at certain times, the kind of propaganda needed in order to "win converts and maintain morale" depends on expectations with regard to future events, and at these points it is reasonable to suppose that the propaganda will be influenced by those expectations. For example:

a. Aggression calls for a pretext. It needs to be justified in the eyes of world opinion, both to promote neutrality among potential enemies and to consolidate war morale within one's own sphere. And this justification is more effective if it starts before the aggression occurs, so that the aggression does not come--as it did in the case of Korea--with scarcely any context to make it seem defensive. (Hitler, who did

* George's study actually covered much more than the process of prediction. It included all inferences made about the conditions under which Nazi propaganda was produced. One of these conditions is the propagandist's anticipation of future action by his own government, but there are also others: his estimate of the military strength of his own country, his estimate of the state of morale in his own country, his judgment as to what factors are impairing morale, etc. George was able to obtain direct evidence on these points through a study of Goebbels' diaries and other Nazi documents which have become available since the war; and the evidence is very promising. It should be clear that in this paper we have limited ourselves somewhat arbitrarily to only two of the conditions determining the nature of propaganda: the basic "mentality" of the propagandist and his expectations of future events.

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not underestimate the inertia of public opinion, preceded most of his aggressive acts with a propaganda build-up. The Czechs and Poles were accused of innumerable atrocities before they were swallowed up; and Britain was accused of being about to attack Norway before Hitler attacked it.)

In the chief type of prediction that now concerns us, this type of logic is involved. If the Kremlin decided now to run a serious risk of all-out war two weeks from now, it would probably want Soviet propaganda to promote three things: (1) as much neutrality as possible among the potential enemies of the USSR--both governments and "peoples"; (2) a widespread belief within the Soviet sphere that "the other fellow started it" and that the war was therefore, like that of 1941-45, a war for Soviet survival; and (3) an absence of panic within the Soviet sphere--the sort of panic that a sudden unheralded outbreak of atomic war might bring. In other words, great and tangible military advantages would be at stake in the task of impairing the enemy's will to fight and increasing that of the home population. It is true that these advantages might all be knowingly sacrificed in order to achieve more fully the military advantage of surprise. This sacrifice was apparently made, deliberately or not deliberately, in the case of Korea. There is no guarantee that the same sacrifice would not be made again; perhaps the Politburo will be so stupid as not to let its propagandists prepare their audiences for an imminent general war. If so, we will reap enormous advantages from a propaganda standpoint. But we cannot count on such stupidity. It is also possible that they will be shrewd enough to prepare their listeners, in open or subtle ways, for all-out hostilities; and if so, we should at least be prepared to make sure that they do not also obtain the advantage of surprise. We should be in a position to detect quickly both open and subtle changes in their propaganda that might be intended to prepare their audiences for imminent war.

b. Reversals of policy are embarrassing, and the wise and well-informed propagandist, anticipating a possible reversal of his government's policy, is likely to ease the transition by becoming relatively silent or noncommittal.

This is the logic presumably involved in the drop in attention to Tito before the official break came. Soviet propagandists presumably did not want the embarrassment of making a conspicuous, over-night about-face, from approval to disapproval. They therefore eased the transition by becoming simply noncommittal, during an interim period of several weeks. (It is doubtful in this case whether the change was deliberately calculated by anyone on the highest level. In view of the atmosphere created by the various Soviet purges, it might be that persons below the highest level got wind of Tito's loss of favor before it became official, and simply played safe by not praising the man who had fallen into disfavor. To approve a man who will soon be condemned by Stalin has not often proved safe, even on the highest Soviet level. It is perhaps noteworthy in this connection that Henry Wallace received very little personal approval in Soviet propaganda, even during the period of his 1948 campaign for the presidency.)

The noncommittal treatment of the Berlin blockade and of possible Soviet participation in the Korean war are related though not identical in principle. In these cases it was a matter of not adopting any strong position at all, rather than of becoming noncommittal on an issue where a strong stand had previously been taken.

c. War morale calls for military as well as moral self-confidence. It is known that, in time of war, propaganda attention to "strength values" (arms, national unity, certainly of ultimate victory, etc.) tends to increase greatly as compared with attention to moral values (democracy, national independence, etc.) which predominate in time of peace. Soviet propaganda now gives enormously greater stress to moral values than to strength values. But if war were imminent, it might seem urgently necessary to establish a minimum of military self-confidence in the home population, and perhaps to put the fear of God into potentially neutral opponents. If so, there should be a marked increase in stress on national strength, certainty of winning "if forced to fight," etc.

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